

REVIEWS

DISEASE IN INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD. By R. W. B. Ellis, O.B.E., M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., and R. G. Mitchell, M.D., F.R.C.P.E., D.C.H. Fifth Edition. (Pp. 720; figs. 316. 70s). Edinburgh and London : E. & S. Livingstone.

THE fact that this well-known textbook has now reached its 5th edition, and has, also, been translated into both Spanish and Greek, is good evidence that it meets a widespread need. It is admirably suited to the needs of the student, house officer, and senior nurse, and by virtue of a good bibliography, makes a good starting point for post-graduate reading. References are given to work published as recently as 1965, so that the book is as up-to-date as it is possible for any textbook to be. A considerable amount of new material is included, but close pruning of all that is dated or non-essential has kept the size of the book within its original limits. Very wisely, the detailed discussion of nutritional disorders and of tuberculosis has been retained. As the preface says "mass immigration has given them a renewed importance in this country".

The study of the neo-natal period is one of the "growing points" of pediatrics at present and this section is extremely good. The respiratory distress syndrome is dealt with reasonably; the realistic "anoxia" replaces "asphyxia"; and there is a brief but evocative mention of the commoner chromosome abnormalities. Early operation for meningo-myelocele is spoken of with less than fashionable enthusiasm.

Much more than in previous editions is said about Disorders of Metabolism and Storage—an area in which diagnosis far outstrips successful treatment despite the current multiplicity of cunningly contrived synthetic diets.

Leukaemia is placed firmly among the neoplastic diseases (with a cross-reference in the chapter heading on Diseases of the Blood) and the present position is well and sympathetically summarized.

The chapter on Behaviour Disorders is very good indeed, and though one may ruefully wonder whether the attitudes of parents are not as unalterable as the spots of leopards, a gallant attempt is made to show how parents, home, and school, may all be manipulated for the child's benefit.

Rather a surprising amount of space is spared for one or two rarities—actinomycosis for example, and a colour photograph of the hands in smallpox (though perhaps it is only in Northern Ireland that this is such a rarity—and perhaps not for much longer even here). On reflection, however, it is probably a good thing to deal generously with diseases which the student is not likely to see—commoner conditions he can learn at the bedside.

There are, of course, details on which opinions might differ—surely, for example, no unit competent to operate on pyloric stenosis still gives fluids subcutaneously? It would, however, be churlish to stress small seeming defects which depend perhaps as much on the idiosyncrasies of the reviewer as on any fault in the authors. This is a textbook which can be recommended unreservedly. M.J.L.F.

LIVINGSTONE'S POCKET DICTIONARY (Lois Oakes) by Nancy Roper. S.R.N., R.S.C.N., R.N.T. Tenth Edition. (Pp. xvi+557. 8s 6d). London and Edinburgh : E. & S. Livingstone, 1966.

THIS small volume is intended for nurses, but medical students and practitioners may find it useful. It would be easy to be critical of the short and incomplete definitions given but most are essentially informative. However, one must often wonder what the relatively uninformed reader may glean from brief statements on many specialised subjects.

Useful appendages include abbreviations of degrees and diplomas, but are not sufficiently up to date to include the Membership or Fellowship of the College of Pathologists.